



News Release

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Health Insurance Top Worry for Racial/Ethnic Groups *UDOH Responds to Study of Multicultural Communities*

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) Center for Multicultural Health (CMH) is pleased to announce the *2008 Qualitative Report: Public Health Messages from Utah's Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations*. The report describes 17 community focus group discussions about health with 180 members of some of Utah's most prominent racial and ethnic minority communities: African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, and Pacific Islanders.

UDOH spent several weeks interviewing the groups about their attitudes on health insurance, medical care, health risks like HIV/AIDS and tobacco use, and about UDOH marketing efforts to reach their communities with helpful information.

“We began this project over a year ago to get insight into Utah minority health issues beyond the usual data and statistics,” said Owen Quiñonez, Director, CMH, UDOH.

“Through this process, we’ve achieved communication between public health workers and minority community members, analyzed health needs, and made plans for addressing health disparities.”

In response, UDOH developed *We Heard You: Letters from Public Health Workers to the Multicultural Communities of Utah*, which details how UDOH employees intend to incorporate suggestions from multicultural community members into health programs. The document also explains what public health is already doing to address those, and lists the limitations that preclude them from implementing all community recommendations.

The 2008 project is the first time public health workers have written back to the multicultural communities to share how they plan to use the study results to improve health care for the groups.

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The qualitative project identified minority community challenges and opportunities related to access to health services, asthma, heart disease and stroke, HIV, immunizations, reproductive health and tobacco prevention. The qualitative report was completed by the University of Utah Department of Family and Preventive Medicine and sponsored by the CMH and other UDOH programs that address these topics.

“The primary message is that Utah’s racial and ethnic communities are very worried about the lack of health insurance,” said CMH Multicultural Health Specialist April Young Bennett, “We also learned they want to have a say in public health decision-making and to be reimbursed for the time they spend on boards and committees.”

Respondents also said repeatedly they want health messages to be concise and culture-specific, and they prefer person-to-person communication over mass marketing.

“Public health workers are deeply concerned about Utah minority health disparities and they’re excited to have input from these communities,” said Bennett. “We are now ready to find creative ways to meet their needs in light of current budget constraints.”

One immediate plan is to begin sponsoring smaller, annual community forums and use other methods seek community input more frequently.

Quiñonez intends to promote study findings throughout UDOH and to outside agencies to encourage culturally appropriate services for Utah minorities.

To view the 2008 *Qualitative Report: Public Health Messages from Utah’s Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations*, see <http://www.health.utah.gov/cmh/data/2008/QualitativeReport.pdf>.

To view *We Heard You: Letters from Public Health Workers to the Multicultural Communities of Utah*, see <http://health.utah.gov/cmh/data/2008QualitativeReportResponse.pdf>.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.